

## **DRAFT**

### **Inter-agency Food & Nutrition Policy Advisory Council Meeting Minutes (IFNPAC)**

**DATE:** July 7, 2016

**TIME:** 12:00-1:30 PM

**LOCATION:** Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, 235 Promenade St, Room 425, Providence, RI 02908

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:** Janet Coit, Director, Department of Environmental Management (DEM); Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, Director, Department of Health (DOH); Allison Rogers, Director of Policy, Department of Administration (DOA); Sue AnderBois; Liz Tanner, Commerce RI.

**ATTENDEES:** Ken Ayars, DEM; Ken Payne, RI Food Policy Council; Joe Masino, DEM; Leo Pollock, RI Food Policy Council; Chris Ausura, DOH; Ann Barone, DOH; David Heckman, DOH; Sarah Peters, DOH; David Dadekian, Eat Drink RI; Katie Kleyla, Eat Drink RI; Kimberly Clark, Farm Fresh RI; Sumana Chintapalli, RI Food Policy Council; Eric Beane, Governor's Office; Jenny Weissbourd, Governor's Office.

Director Alexander-Scott and Director Coit called the meeting to order at 12:07 and began by welcoming Sue AnderBois, the new Director of Food Strategy. The new position will focus on food systems issues across agencies to develop and implement a statewide food plan. The plan will build on the newly updated RI Food Assessment.

#### **1. Updates from Dr. Alexander-Scott and Director Coit**

Director Coit provided legislative updates. She shared the Ag Day news release about the Local Agriculture & Seafood Act (LASA) grant program, and noted that the budget article that would have provided on-going funding for LASA did not get approved. She stressed the importance of finding sustainable funding to support this program. She noted that supporting the seafood industry and connecting farmers to land are key priorities for DEM, and made the case for finding resources to support these efforts.

#### **2. Approval of January 27, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

Director Coit made a motion, seconded by Allison Rogers to approve the minutes of the 1/27/16 meeting. However, because there was not a quorum present, the minutes will be held until the next meeting.

#### **3. Update on Institutional Purchasing RFP**

Allison Rogers provided an update about the DOA's Institutional Purchasing RFP. In recent years, the DOA updated its Master Price Agreement (MPA) to encourage more local purchasing, and has worked to define what constitutes local and set a baseline. The state recently issued an RFP for the DOA cafeteria, which focused on five priorities: 1) nutritious

food, 2) sustainability (composting, packaging, local food), 3) quality, 4) cost, and 5) customer service (flow, efficiency). Only the current vendor responded to the initial RFP, but a new solicitation is forthcoming to attract additional bids. The current vendor has already made improvements in response to the RFP, including increasing availability of healthy food. Director Coit suggested that the DOA could add points to the RFP for local buying, or ask applicants to explain what they will be doing to support local purchasing.

#### 4. **New DHS SNAP Administrator & Other Related Updates**

Dr. Alexander-Scott announced that there is a new SNAP administrator at the Department of Human Services (DHS), whose bio will be circulated to the group. DOH and DHS are continuing to strengthen their connection, and collaborating to address food insecurity in the state. The Directors of both departments recently toured SNAP and WIC facilities to showcase their partnership. There are also partnered efforts underway to support healthy food purchasing at farmers' markets by SNAP and WIC recipients. Despite tremendous effort, a federal USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) proposal to provide support for bonus bucks for SNAP recipients at the state level did not receive funding. However, WIC has increased their farmers' market checks, increasing purchasing power from \$15 to \$21.

Further, the majority of the Health Equity Zones (HEZ) – which are uniquely funded community collaboratives designed to address social determinants of health - have established food access as a top need.

Lastly, Ken Ayers shared that the farmers' market network remains a strong and vibrant contributor to the local food economy, despite some normal contraction (RI still has over 40 markets). Next steps include tackling regulatory barriers, especially for seafood vendors, in line with the Governor's goal to make it easier to do business in the state.

#### 3. **Presentation from the RI Food Policy Council on *Update to the RI Food Assessment: 2011-2016 and Beyond***

Ken Payne provided an update on the RI Food Assessment. He began by noting that interest in developing a state food plan emerged at a meeting last year, and credited this group's energy in driving state investment and increased institutional capacity. The updated RI food assessment will provide a foundation of data, enabling analysis of current conditions to inform the new state food plan. It departs from the 2011 assessment in its more thorough look at demographic data (whereas the 2011 plan focused primarily on food system components), and the addition of an entirely new chapter on the economic contribution of the food sector to the state, which enables analysis of the economic development potential of the sector. Leo Pollock added that the assessment identifies gaps and leverage points, and is not prescriptive but shines light on areas that need attention, coordination, and improvement. Director Coit briefly discussed messaging, and encouraged the group to communicate that the forthcoming food plan is important to the Raimondo administration, helpful to state agencies within and beyond the three-legged stool of DEM/DOH/Commerce, and can help to break down government silos. Ken Payne added that another central message is that planning works, and can produce desired outcomes that enable the state to innovate and lead (as evidenced by the Ocean SAMP and Rhode Island's nation-leading commitment to off-

shore wind). The FPC is also an important asset, and has five years' experience to draw on. Last year, the FPC developed well-received community food systems fact sheets that have served as a model for other states that should be integrated into the food plan. Community-level data can help to frame local targets and educate and engage residents. The FPC is prepared to commit capacity to support planning, including deploying outreach and community engagement tools to ensure robust exposure in development and adoption. This will support an exciting RI plan, that leverages the state's size and tells the story of RI's unique food culture and traditions.

#### **4. Building on the Assessment: Development of Rhode Island's Strategic Food Systems Plan**

Sue AnderBois spoke about developing a strategic plan from the ground up, by elevating and aligning efforts already happening in the state. She offered the metaphor of a puzzle with the pieces scattered on the table; the state vision will offer the top of the box that enables us to fit the pieces together, and find and fill gaps. A centerpiece of planning is identify what's going well and where we can replicate, celebrating and communicating successes (such as Providence's farm to school leadership) to energize the process, and building trust and buy-in. Sue is working with Rose to align communications about food across agencies. A next step is developing a timeline, including how this body best can work together in meetings and offline. RI can learn from other states who have already developed statewide food plans – to streamline the process and create a plan that enables action and implementation.

Director Coit advised that the group consider other agencies and state players whose work connects to food but might not be reflected in current strategic priorities. Look for opportunities to show them the value of the plan and why their departments are integral, and engage them in the process including the celebration of early wins. Dr. Alexander-Scott noted that the group should focus on three overall categories in framing the plan: 1) agriculture and fisheries, 2) health, food access, and food security, and 3) economic development and commerce. The question is where each agency fits into the three major areas. Sue suggested thinking of this three-legged stool as a Venn diagram, with intersection points (e.g., SNAP at farmers' markets hits all three). Liz Tanner offered Commerce as an example of a department with a less obvious connection to food, but that intersects in its focus on tourism and marketing (promoting food culture), business solicitation, and addressing regulatory barriers. The Agency Cross-Training (ACT) group engages multiple state agencies and programs to understand everyone's role in streamlining regulation. ACT analyzes mock scenarios like the Matunuck Oyster Bar to identify problems and find solutions, including better streamlining and coordination, and should be aligned with the food planning effort. David Heckman noted the ways that health and commerce come together: health improvements driven by diet, nutrition, and active lifestyle are huge cost drivers, and addressing these can improve private insurance costs for employers. In the coming weeks, Sue will circulate a draft timeline for feedback, with a focus on getting to action steps.

#### **5. Adjournment**

Director Coit adjourned the meeting at 1:31 pm.